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# Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the evaluation of the United Nations system response in East Timor: coordination and effectiveness

## Note by the Secretary-General

**Addendum**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit for the consideration of the General Assembly his comments, and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Evaluation of United Nations system response in East Timor: coordination and effectiveness" (JIU/REP/2002/10) (A/58/85).

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*Summary*

The report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Evaluation of United Nations system response in East Timor: coordination and effectiveness" examines the emergency humanitarian actions taken by the United Nations system in East Timor, including the arrangements, processes and mechanisms applied. It highlights the lessons learned from the experience with a view to improving coordination among United Nations system organizations and maximizing the impact and effectiveness of their operations in emergencies and post-conflict situations.

While welcoming the analysis of the Inspectors, members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination note that numerous actions had already been taken that addressed the weaknesses identified in the report. Nor does the report reflect the progress that had been achieved in enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations emergency response at the time the report was written. Consequently, the recommendations in the report are only partially relevant.

## Introduction

1. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Evaluation of United Nations system response in East Timor: coordination and effectiveness" (JIU/REP/2002/10) (A/58/85-E/2003/80) follows the preliminary review by JIU of the mandates and components of several United Nations emergency operations initiated since mid-1999. The report examines the operations of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), which had the mandate to govern East Timor from October 1999 until its independence on 20 May 2002. The report also evaluates the institutional arrangements and capacities of certain organizations of the United Nations system for emergency humanitarian assistance, as well as the funding mechanisms applied and their impact on the effectiveness of the system's contributions to the reconstruction and development of East Timor.

## I. General comments

2. Members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) appreciate the report's analysis of the essential components of the United Nations system response in East Timor, including the capabilities of the organizations of the United Nations system for emergency operations, and coordination and effectiveness during emergency situations. However, they note that the report does not examine to the same extent the "governance and public administration" component of the mandate of UNTAET. CEB members regard this particular aspect as defining the pivotal role of the United Nations system in the case of East Timor. It is recalled that the role of the United Nations system in East Timor was one entailing actual "governance" as a de facto transitional government, under the authority of the Security Council, until East Timor achieved independence. This experience was of immense value to the system as it enabled it not only to fully utilize the experience from earlier United Nations operations but also to develop a deeper understanding of the system's role in such situations and, finally, to learn from its experiences. The analysis by JIU of this aspect of operations in East Timor would have been extremely helpful inter alia, for drawing lessons for the future. CEB members note that the report recommends actions that have already been taken, thus rendering the report somewhat misleading and outdated. A more vigorous effort at consultation, especially with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, would have been beneficial for the analysis and conclusions of the report.

3. Some members of CEB point out that "governance and public administration" is essentially what differentiated the challenges faced by the United Nations system in coordinating system-wide response in East Timor from those that it faced in Afghanistan. In practice, governance and public administration, emergency response and coordination are very closely interconnected and mutually interdependent — so much so that the evaluation of individual elements would not be reasonable or fair, and would probably not lead to meaningful conclusions.

4. In considering the overall findings and conclusions of the report, CEB members offer, in particular, the following responses:

- They welcome the importance given in the report to the need for ensuring a more effective transition from the humanitarian phase to a sustained development phase.

- They note that the crisis in East Timor occurred at a time when the United Nations system was in the process of developing a system-wide capability that would have enabled UNTAET to undertake closer coordination and draw more thoroughly upon the capacities of the United Nations system, including United Nations departments, its funds and programmes and the specialized agencies.

- While they acknowledge that it is useful to have the report focus more closely on the weaknesses of the United Nations system's role in East Timor in order to emphasize important lessons to be learned, they note nonetheless that the report does not fully discuss the tremendous positive accomplishments for the United Nations system as a whole so as to make it possible to see what worked and what did not. Indeed, the greatest contribution of UNTAET had been the provision of a viable substitute Government until the sovereign government took office upon independence. This has helped to maintain the rule of law and put in place a fundamental administrative structure in a land that knew only violence and insecurity for many years, which enabled emergency response and the necessary coordination to take place.

- They note that the report does not appear to reflect the significant contribution of the military component in both the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) and UNTAET, particularly in maintaining security and conducting humanitarian activities.

5. CEB members are of the view that the report does not sufficiently take account of the major limitations faced by the United Nations system in dealing with post-ballot emergency in Timor-Leste and their consequences. In this regard, they note that, with the exception of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), none of the specialized agencies had any presence or implemented projects in the country prior to the establishment of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) in mid-1999. As a result, the United Nations system had to create from scratch the necessary capacity to address the post-September 1999 crisis, and the fact that it was able to do so quickly and effectively constitutes a positive aspect of its response. This is not to underestimate the difficulties encountered and the limitations that arose from having to mount a quick response capability.

6. CEB members observe that the report does not sufficiently consider the extent to which organizations of the United Nations system have been endeavouring to learn from past lessons and draw lessons from system-wide experiences. For example, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was evaluating the mobilization, coordination and facilitation of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan during the escalating crisis in the period immediately before September 11 and in the following months.

## II. Comments on recommendations

***Recommendation 1*: The Secretary-General should request the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), as Chairman of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), to produce a United Nations "Who does what" manual on emergency situations. To achieve this mandate, IASC should work to identify a clear division of labour in emergency situations among agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, which should be based on the comparative advantage and the value to be added by each organization in such situations. It should also ensure that the division of labour would be commensurate with the emergency capabilities of the organizations to undertake the specific activities assigned to each. In this context, IASC should serve as a forum within which to exchange and share information about best institutional practices for emergency response available within its members.**

7. While CEB members agree on the importance of having a clear division of labour based on the comparative advantage of organizations of the system to deliver various emergency and relief services, they note that considerable work has already been done in this regard, inter alia, within the context of IASC. CEB members are of the view that while in theory a strict division of labour may appear to be a powerful tool, in practice a division of roles and responsibilities has to take into account the actual presence and capacity of particular organizations in the field in a given situation, which inevitably vary from situation to situation. They agree, therefore, that a degree of flexibility, within the broad mandates of each organization of the system, is essential to a successful strategy for a timely and effective response to crisis situations. This point applies equally well to the suggestion that the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) "produce a template for coordination structures among the organizations" put forward in recommendation 3 below. In addition to this observation, CEB members note that the report would have benefited from a deeper reflection on what was actually being done at the field level. For example, while the role of the resident coordinator (in Jakarta) vis-à-vis the United Nations system's role in East Timor was still being defined, and the presence of United Nations system humanitarian personnel on the ground was still grossly limited, efforts were nevertheless taken to establish inter-agency contingency planning that would link up with United Nations system engagement in the rest of the country.

***Recommendation 2*: The Secretary-General should request the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), as Chairman of IASC, to strengthen the IASC functions of early warning and contingency planning. In this context, IASC, through its current Reference Group on Contingency Planning, should consider measures to improve networking and communication among IASC members and ensure a systematic exchange of contingency assessment among its members. Individual organizations should also enhance their own capacities for contingency assessment and planning in their respective areas of activities. In this regard, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should give particular attention to enhancing its analytical capacity in order to exercise appropriate leadership in the timely formulation of integrated contingency plans.**

8. CEB members note that the need for strengthening contingency planning was recognized by the Secretary-General in his report of 14 May 2002 (A/57/77-

E/2002/63) entitled "Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations", and that the Emergency Relief Coordinator and IASC have already addressed the issue of strengthening inter-agency contingency planning. This is reflected in the establishment of the IASC Reference Group on Contingency Planning and Preparedness in early 2001 and the endorsement of the Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance in November of that year. Furthermore, all resident and humanitarian coordinators have been requested jointly by the Chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to develop inter-agency contingency plans. The results of these efforts are manifested in the successful and comprehensive inter-agency contingency planning process for the Middle East in 2002, and some 20 other inter-agency contingency plans for pre-crisis countries. As concerns individual organizations of the system, CEB members note, for example, that the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF have strengthened their own preparedness methodologies and have instituted the process in numerous countries.

9. CEB members emphasize that the system has been taking appropriate steps in defining comprehensive policy guidelines that address the type of problems experienced in East Timor. They are of the view that, at this juncture, the next issue that should be addressed system-wide is that of donor engagement at the earliest stage of the preparedness exercise. They also point out in this context that lack of donor support and availability of resources was an important inhibiting factor. They draw the attention of Member States to the following consideration, as a matter of policy and strategy: support for stronger preparedness leads to mitigated humanitarian needs when a crisis breaks out, and this in turn leads to fewer humanitarian funding requirements in the longer term.

***Recommendation 3*: The Secretary-General should request the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), as Chairman of IASC, to produce a template for coordination structures among the organizations. The template should be guided by the "Who does what" manual recommended above, and should be activated and formalized during the emergencies.**

10. The comments of CEB members concerning recommendation 1 above also applies to recommendation 3.

***Recommendation 4*: The Secretary-General should explore measures to expand the pool of reliable and trained staff, including at the senior levels, to meet the needs of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in large-scale or complex emergencies. This could include arrangements between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of Human Resources Management of the United Nations Secretariat to develop the policy of a "multi-tier approach" for staff resources, whereby OCHA could draw on standby United Nations staff, including at senior levels, if it needed to go beyond its own staff resources.**

11. Recommendation 4 is generally supported. In this connection, CEB members note that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has already launched a number of activities intended to empower staff members with the coordination skills and services to be provided at the field level. These include, for example: (a) the development of the Emergency Field Coordination Training (EFCT) programme of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs so as

to equip junior- to mid-level staff with the skills required for field coordination; (b) the creation of a surge capacity roster to put limited numbers of headquarters staff on standby for immediate short-term deployment to the field; and (c) the establishment of a pipeline of well-experienced emergency field managers for the resident coordinator system so that a qualified senior coordinator would already be in place or could be rapidly redeployed from another field station when his/her services were required.

***Recommendation 5*: The legislative organs of participating organizations may wish to encourage the Executive Heads of their respective organizations to make more use of the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) as a planning and programming tool, and to enhance their organizations' capacities to achieve this, in the framework of the ongoing efforts within IASC to strengthen the CAP as a tool for strategic planning and coordination.**

12. CEB members note that in its own evaluation of the United Nations system's response in East Timor, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs made a similar recommendation and that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, together with IASC, has already taken steps towards implementing recommendation 5. For instance, in April 2002, IASC endorsed a plan of action to strengthen the Consolidated Appeal Process, thus providing a framework for improving senior management involvement, increased advocacy, and technical guidance for the strategic planning and coordination aspects.

***Recommendation 6*: The legislative organs of those participating organizations that have not yet done so may wish to support the establishment of an emergency revolving fund in their respective organizations.**

13. CEB members are of the view that the validity of recommendation 6 needs to be established by each of the concerned organizations of the system. Some of them contend that the chances of obtaining emergency funding from specific donors tend to increase if an organization has internal emergency revolving funds that would enable it to enter the field quickly and establish the visibility and credibility needed to attract donor funding. They also note that this recommendation may be of more immediate relevance to certain organizations than to others. In fact, UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and WFP already have emergency funds and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) makes intensive use of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund.

***Recommendation 7*: The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may wish to request the Secretary-General to submit proposals on how to enhance the United Nations system's capacity to manage the immediate transition from relief to development including by: (a) enhancing United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) capacity to coordinate such a transition, (b) exploring joint arrangements between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP to ensure a smooth transition, (c) establishing linkages between the CAP, common country assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes and (d) focusing the arrangements for transition on coordination and planning, rather than on fund-raising.**

14. Recommendation 7 as formulated is not relevant because the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2002/32 of 26 July 2002, had already asked the United Nations system to address the funding and strategic planning gap between relief and development activities in the context of natural disasters and complex emergencies and to continue to strengthen the Consolidated Appeal Process as a coordination and strategic planning tool for the provision of humanitarian assistance and transition from relief to development. The Secretary-General, for his part, has instructed UNDG to develop, by September 2003, an implementation plan to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organization's presence in developing countries, including such features as integrated planning, budgeting and resource mobilization tools for countries emerging from conflict (see A/57/387 and Corr.1 of 9 September 2002, action 14). CEB members note, in this regard, that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has taken the leading role in dealing with the harmonization of transition programming under the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-UNDG Working Group on Transitional Issues, and in the exploration of similar transition arrangement with other partners (including Governments and UNDP) in a number of countries (for example, Angola and the Sudan).

15. As regards the responsibility of UNDP in coordinating transitional arrangements, CEB members are of the view that this question should be examined in the context of the resident coordinator system, keeping in view the role of UNDP as host to that system, as well as the role of other organizations represented directly at the field level that take part in the resident coordinator system. In this context, such a coordinating role indeed belongs to the resident coordinator as defined by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/192 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and which was clarified in the system-wide guidelines adopted by CEB (then the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC)) in 1999 (ACC/1999/15, annex IV). While it is true that UNDP plays a key role in supporting field-level coordination, CEB members express the view that the overemphasis in the JIU report on this role may be misinterpreted by members of the country team, thus diluting the shared responsibility of all United Nations system organizations represented at the country level in providing support to coordination efforts.

***Recommendation 8*: The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may wish to request the Secretary-General to ensure that the CCA and UNDAF processes are able to reflect as soon as possible the impact of crises so that the United Nations organizations may adjust their development programmes and activities in the country accordingly.**

16. Members of CEB generally support this recommendation. In particular, they support the need to strengthen the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework processes to ensure a more harmonized approach to development in countries affected by severe crises. In this regard, the current guidelines for the formulation of both CCA and UNDAF and the prevailing arrangements adopted for their preparation may need to be improved in order that the special requirements of effective transition from emergency to development may be captured.

***Recommendation 9*: The Secretary-General should undertake an evaluation of the new processes and mechanisms applied in the planning of recently established complex peace operations, such as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), in order to assess to what extent inputs from agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system as well as from various departments of the United Nations Secretariat were integrated.**

17. In considering this recommendation, CEB members note the following: First, an internal review of the planning for UNAMA has already been conducted by the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. Second, one should keep in view the fact that the United Nations system had a much narrower task to perform in Afghanistan than in East Timor. Thus, for the purpose of recommendation 9, the experiences of the United Nations system in providing emergency response and coordination in Kosovo and Cambodia (where the United Nations system also had, as in East Timor, the broader "governance and public administration" role) would be more relevant as the bases for the review of processes and mechanisms. Third, and in any case, CEB members feel that the evaluation of new processes and mechanisms applied by the United Nations system in recent crisis situations, including in Afghanistan, should not be limited to merely assessing the extent of the integration of the inputs from the various organizations of the United Nations system but should also examine the policy options and the strategic measures that would facilitate and ensure more effective deployment of such inputs in the future.

***Recommendation 10*: The Secretary-General should ensure that inputs from agencies are properly incorporated in the staffing strategy currently being developed for peace operations.**

18. CEB members note that work is already progressing in this area. For example, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat has already adopted a standard practice of circulating on a system-wide basis the job profiles of much-needed staff members. Within the United Nations "Galaxy" personnel system, a Department of Peacekeeping Operations-specific site is being created that will include vacancy announcements from 52 generic operational groups regarding posts for which personnel from other organizations of the system can apply. This will be further enhanced through the establishment of hyperlinks with other United Nations system organizations. Moreover, inter-agency mechanisms are being explored to enable a range of legal expertise available within the United Nations system and beyond to be harnessed by various operational groups for the purpose of dealing with rule of law-related issues and other legal aspects of peacekeeping operations.

***Recommendation 11*: The Secretary-General, in his capacity as chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), should explore with the World Bank ways and means to increase opportunities for the involvement of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in the implementation of Bank-funded/managed projects. This could be achieved, inter alia, by holding joint technical seminars to promote better understanding of the procedures, constraints and capabilities of the World Bank and those of the United Nations organizations in relation to project implementation.**

19. Recommendation 11 is generally acceptable.

***Recommendation 12*: The Secretary-General should request UNDP to engage in discussions with the World Bank with a view to developing arrangements to be applied in cases of major emergency situations where the Bank decides to intervene, so as to ensure a role for UNDP in the channelling of funds allocated to finance specific rehabilitation and development activities, especially in sectors where the expertise of the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies should be sought.**

20. As concerns recommendation 12, CEB members are of the view that in addition to UNDP, other United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies should be given every opportunity to contribute to emergency operations and/or to support post-emergency rehabilitation and development. For that purpose, they should be invited to participate in the financing dialogue with the World Bank, or with any other financing institution for that matter. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the possible coordinating role of the national Government especially with respect to post-crisis rehabilitation and development whenever the local circumstances makes this feasible.